PAINTING IN WATER COLOURS

[Cox, David]

[A complete set]

Miss Sally Cox

of

Boston Mass

Mrs Joseph Cox Boston. April 3 1810.

A SERIES

Of Progressive Lessons,

INTENDED TO ELUCIDATE THE

ART OF LANDSCAPE PAINTING

IN

WATER COLOURS.

Third Edition.

PUBLISHED BY T. CLAY, NO. 18, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON.

1816.

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TO THE

LOVERS OF THE ART

OF

Landscape Painting in Water Colours.

A Third Edition of this Work being demanded, it is presumed to have passed the ordeal of public investigation; the whole has notwithstanding undergone a revision, in which, many particulars have been added, and others expunged, as the proposed clearness of direction appeared to require. There have also been new designs introduced upon the principles of those contained in the preceding editions, and the Series of Progressive Lessons is again submitted with a degree of confidence, yet with no less anxiety that it may continue to be useful to the admirers of Landscape Painting.

It is earnestly recommended that the attention be directed to the progressive mode of instruction *contained in the following pages, that perseverance may be more strongly excited, the difficulties more easily surmounted, and the simple process humbly professed to be taught, be thereby rendered more worthy of consideration.*

THE AUTHOR.

Sketching.

It is necessary to be provided with a drawing board, a T square, Indian rubber, and particularly with good black lead pencils; such as are easily cut to a point without breaking, and give clear markings are the best.

Convenience requires that the paper should be fixed; the usual method is, to wet it with a sponge and water, as equally as possible; let it remain a few minutes to expand, and fasten it in the drawing board; or, the paper may be glued on the edges, and so fixed on a plain board, in either case, it must remain until perfectly dry. After the proportion of the drawing is determined, apply the T square to the edge of the board, and draw the boundary lines.

In sketching, the learner is requested at all times to observe the commencement should be on the left. In the annexed outline, first sketch the distant hills, proceed next with the bridge, and the objects on a line with it, and lastly with the foreground: by so doing, the hand will not obliterate any of the lines in the progress. The sketching is recommended to be done with a degree of slightness, serving only to determine the positions of the different objects, with some little attention to the forms; after which, the eye should be removed a short distance, and the sketch compared with the original: the incorrectness, if any, will thus appear more evidently. Perpendicular lines are to be attended to, for, from the habit of slanting the strokes in writing, the learner often imperceptibly inclines them in a similar direction. Horizontal lines are more easily preserved, being



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parallel to the base. Diagonal lines occurring in the perspective, are ruled from the point of sight, they determine the heights of objects thrown obliquely to the eye in buildings, &c. A plate is annexed, shewing the perspective lines of the subjects, which accompany this work, on a reduced scale, they will require the particular attention of the learner, while drawing the subject, afterwards it is presumed an occasional reference will be sufficient.

Explanation of the Plate on Perspective.

a. The base of the subject.

b. The horizontal line, determining the height of the eye of the person supposed to be viewing the scene, and parallel to the base.

c. The point of sight, immediately in the front of the spot on which the spectator is supposed to be placed, and to which the perspective lines of objects seen on that angle, are drawn.

Lines in more complicated subjects as d, d, are drawn to a point on the horizontal line, called the vanishing point.

Sketching seems to demand a kind of facility in execution, and though this may be the result of practice, it may not be improper to hint, that at first great care should be taken to express the outline with all possible freedom; for instance, a distant hill should have no sharp or unpleasing form. The offensive line here alluded to, will be apparent to the learner, if a hill be drawn in the form of a triangle, a square, &c. and it will be equally obvious that forms produced by undulating lines are more agreeable, sufficiently indicating how essential a pleasing outline is to the general effect of a Landscape.

There will not be any necessity to rub out so faint a line as is required in the first process. If a line be sketched incorrectly rather

proceed above or below it, as it shall seem requisite, until the true form be produced; this the eye will immediately seize, then it may be drawn rather stronger, and those which have served as guides to the correct line, rubbed away with crumb of bread. Caution is recommended in the use of Indian rubber when the subject is intended to be finished in colours, for the friction produces a roughness on the surface of the paper which will defeat every attempt to obtain transparency or clearness.

After the simple outline is thus obtained, proceed to give the minutiæ, such as the curving of the road, the boundary of the grass, &c. on the edge of the road, the marking of the stone-work on the bridge, &c. &c. these may be put in with a firmer pencil, giving the appearance of distinctness, rather than the reality; for instance, a line

or mark, which in effect is to be straight, should not be made as if ruled from one extremity to the other, but drawn with a tremulous motion of the hand, dotting it stronger in one part than another. The lines in the shade may be more heavily marked, that the outlines may appear through the masses, in the shading.

Repeated trials should be made and compared with each other, the sketch possessing the greatest freedom, may receive the ink shading. The requisites for which are, two vessels to contain water, one, from which to soften the tints, preserved clean, the other, to wash the pencils in, a few small delf saucers in which to mix the tints, some swan and some goose quill hair pencils, which should be elastic, and form a good point while using. In the choice of Indian ink, select such as will give off freely, and smoothly, on being wetted and rubbed



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on any even surface; any other will defeat the endeavour to produce clearness in the drawing. The practice first with Indian ink, is recommended because the process is more simple, and the effects, produced by light and shade, more readily obtained than with colours.

Shading with Indian Ink.

A tint is made by dipping the end of the cake into water, rubbing it in a saucer, and afterwards reducing the colour so rubbed off to the tone required, with clean water.



Make three gradations of tint, see the Margin, commence with the weak tint No. 1, laying it evenly over every part, except the extreme lights; when dry, proceed with the second degree of strength No. 2, lay it over the parts receding

from the light, leaving the tint No. 1, between the white parts and the tint No. 2; in laying this the pencil should not be too full, but frequently replenished, so that the ink may be spread without giving hardness to the edges. The drawing of the respective parts must be particularly attended to. Then take the strong tint, No. 3, put in the masses, or parts requiring force, re-touching until the effect be obtained. In the foregoing process, it is intended for the edge of each tint to be distinguished; if it should seem too sharp in any particular part, it may be softened with a pencil dipped in clean water. A drawing can be made with the use of one tint only; but by repeated tedious washings, a woolly or spiritless effect will be produced. Freedom and spirit are sacrificed in the endeavour to give too great a degree of finish. The same method applies to the following subjects, which

the learner is requested to practice, keeping the washes of ink as broad as the nature of the subjects will admit. Enlarging now and then a subject, four or six times the size of the original, gives scope for boldness, and freedom of hand; reversing the lights, placing the breadth of light on the foreground, as in the Abbey; on the middle, as in the Sea View; or on remoter parts as in the Ruin, are studies of considerable consequence to the learner, they induce the mind to exert itself and excite the desire to sketch from nature.

Neutral Tint.

When such studies are intended to be finished in colours, the neutral tint is a basis preferable to any other, as being better adapted to the aërial tones, it is composed of Indigo with small portions of

Sepia and Lake [redacted] The following subjects are produced with the neutral tint by the same process as before described with Indian Ink.

Colouring with Simple Tints.

The colours requisite are Lake, *Burnt Ochre, Indigo, Gamboge, and Sepia. Prussian-blue, and burnt terra de Sienna may be sometimes necessary ; they possess a greater degree of brilliancy. For the mixing of tints, besides the small saucers, a delf palette is recommended, having divisions, in which the tints may be preserved without fear of their running into each other. Select a few flat pencils of different widths for Skies, or broad washes ; these pencils may be

* Called by the Colour-preparers, Light Red.



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joined, having at either end one, for the convenience of turning to soften off the tint laid by the other.

Colouring with Simple Tints upon the Preparation in Neutral Colours.

Make a tint of indigo, match it with the sky of the annexed subject. Soften the flat pencils, pressing out the superfluous water, on the edge of the vessel, mix the tint well with one of them, and with the pencil moderately full, apply it to the angle of the sky, opposite the light of the subject, pass down the end to the hill, then keeping the pencil nearly upright, continue to wash towards the light from side to side, advancing not more than an inch at each motion of the pencil, until the space be nearly covered; then turn the pencil, and with the other nearly dry, continue the wet edge of the tint for the remainder of the space, and pass it along the edge of the tint left

on the hills to prevent its shewing in a sharp line through the other tints. If the tint should not have been spread evenly, when it is dry, a sponge softened in water, and passed two or three times across the drawing, will restore it. It is easier perhaps to the learner, to commence with a weaker tint, and by repeating, to produce the effect, in which case, one tint must be perfectly dry, before a second is laid on, and each time it must be carried less forward than the preceding.

For broad skies; it will facilitate the spreading of the tint, if a clean sponge, dipped in water, be passed over the paper previously, the seeming greasiness of the paper, will thereby be destroyed.

When the sky is finished, with the same tint, pass over the water, and grass on the foreground, then add a little indigo, and pass

over the distant hills, and all the bushes, taking care not to leave the colour too full on the edges, lest an offensive hardness be produced; this tint may be laid with a large goose quill pencil, and should it be necessary to replenish the pencil with colour to complete the space, be careful to take but little, for, if at the edge of the expended tint, a full pencil be applied, the unequal distribution will cause the space to become rough, and give considerable trouble; this should be remembered whenever sufficient colour has not been taken at the first, to cover the space proposed. With a weak tint of Ochre, lay over the whole of the ground; weaken it, and partially stain the bridge; then with a tint of Gamboge, pass over the bushes, and the grass on the foreground, weaken the tint by adding a little water, pass over the part under the arches; weaken it again, and stain partially those

parts of the bridge which are in the light, weaken it yet more, till it will but just destroy the blueness of the water, wash from the front, and soften off at the arches. With a very weak tint of lake, pass over the whole of the distance, then with a tint of sepia, pass over the shaded part of the bridge; the reflections are to partake of the colours of the objects which produce them, they are somewhat lighter, but may be done at the same time, by wetting the point of the pencil to reduce the force of the tint contained in it. A few weak touches of ochre may be marked upon the bridge, ground, &c. to give richness to the tender tints beneath.

It would be perplexing, even if it were advisable, to attempt a description of the effects of colours when compounded, the variety is endless; but it may be essential that a few leading particulars on this point should be mentioned.

The primitive colours are Red, Blue, and Yellow. A simple tint is produced by colour being rubbed from one cake and reduced with clean water to the tone required, it is denominated simple because mixture is not necessary to obtain it. A compound tint is produced by the mixture of colours, as lake and indigo to produce a purple; blue and yellow to produce a green, &c. these are also called derivatives because they have no existence but by mixture.

All colours, or rather tints, when used simple, are clearer, than when compounded, and they appear to greater advantage, whatever the strength, by being judiciously opposed to compound tints. Thus red in its varieties of tint may be contrasted by green in its varieties. Blue by orange, and yellow by purple in its varieties.

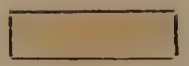
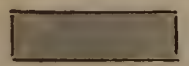
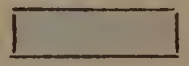
It will be observed that red, blue, and yellow, the primitive or simple tints, do not afford the most pleasing contrasts; nor do the derivative, or compound tints, orange, purple, and green, as opposed to each other, hence may be deduced a direction in the choice of tints to produce the most agreeable contrasts, and, it is also worthy of notice, that such selections with respect to contrast, produce a perfect harmony every way consistent with the laws of nature, or with the rules of art; from both of which is learned, that real beauty as applied to the art of painting does not consist in multiplicity of colours, but in the just combination of a few.

The prints which accompany these observations have been aquatinted to assist in producing the requisite force, but drawings from them, with respect to the outline, coloured, or rather

painted, according to the directions, will be in their effects far more pleasing.

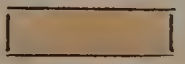
Compound Tints.

The following subjects are required to be painted with greater force than the preceding lesson on Colouring, the light and shade having been previously determined with the neutral tint. Upon every application of tint, let it be considered how far a colour previously laid will be affected in tone and strength; for a judicious observance in this particular will materially assist the learner in acquiring the knowledge necessary to produce the required effect with the least difficulty. Wash a tint of indigo  in a diagonal direction, about half way over the sky, having the greater breadth of light at the horizon, and, while the edge of the tint is wet, soften it off; when

this is dry pass a tint of ochre  over the whole of the subject, as evenly as possible. With a tint of sepia and ochre  mark the breakings on the foreground, repeating the tint where additional force is required upon the buildings, trees, grounds, &c. on the mass between the foreground and distance. With a tint of gray, composed of ochre, indigo, and lake,  mark the stronger breakings of the buildings, the shades, and the trees, leaving the tops, which receive the light; repeat where a deeper tone is required until all the parts have their due force. Then with a tint of purple composed of indigo and lake  pass over the mass forming the distance, bringing it over the ground and trees upon the second plan, this should be done with care, lest by passing the pencil, too frequently, over tints which have been previously laid, it should cause them to rise



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and mix with the tint in use: the pencil therefore should not be too full of colour, and being drawn over the mass, part at a time, without retouching where the tint is wet, the tone will be given without doing injury; the distant mass may be retouched giving depth to the parts opposed to the lights. With a tint of ochre and gamboge,  pass over the whole of the foreground, retouching as the sketching, may indicate. Then with a tint of green, composed of indigo, ochre, and gamboge,  touch in the tops of trees where the gray tint had been omitted, and on the ground agreeably with the sketching, next with a tint of red, composed of ochre and gamboge  touch in the parts of the building, where a rawness prevails, or, as it may be termed, warm the lights of the mass, on the trees, or on the ground as it may require; the touching with this colour should be cut

to the shape of the part with exactness; clearness will be lost by any other method. The water may be done with the tints of the objects reflected. The foreground will require a few stains to determine the grass, the road, &c. and may be enriched with strong touches of burnt sienna being careful to preserve the mass of light.

In reviewing the subject for the purpose of harmonizing the tints bear in mind that lights, must be warmer than shades, and retouch accordingly. The crudity of a green tint may be rendered mellow by a tint of lake. A tint of indigo will reduce a warmth too violent, and a tint of ochre will impart warmth to a tone too cold. Blue tints will cause objects to recede, while red or yellow will cause them to advance in proportion to the strength of the tint, and with the help of appropriate touches communicate the aërial perspective to the subject.



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An Elevated Foreground.

In painting this subject the objects on the foreground require to be marked with decision, yet so as to preserve a breadth of shade opposed to the aërial tints of the distance, the extreme part of which should melt into the atmosphere, the hills should have less and less of the aërial tone, as they approach, until broken by the chalk hill, and powerful foreground, which, giving the idea of an extensive vale, breaks the communication. The sky is with a tint of indigo softened off, and afterwards a weak tint of lake and gamboge passed over the whole of the sky. The clouds are re-touched with ochre. Pass over all the hills a weak tint of Prussian blue, then leaving the most distant, pass over the remaining hills with indigo and lake; then, leaving the hills next in distance to those before left, add a little gamboge to

the tint, and pass over the remaining parts, re-touching and staining as the objects seem to require, till the distance be completed. The objects will be made to approach the eye, in proportion to the power of the red and yellow stains, and to recede in proportion to the tenderness of the blue and grey stains. These are the gradations that mark the aërial perspective, and their correctness determines the relative distances of the objects.

The Mill, ground, and masses of trees are washed with appropriate tints, and touched with indigo, lake, and sepia, in one strong tint, retouching as the advancing indicates; afterwards touch the road and objects with sepia, indigo, and gamboge, also with burnt sienna, to give richness to the foreground, and to detach it by tone as well as power, from the distance.



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Sea View.

In this subject the shape of the clouds is formed by the blue tint of the sky, as taste or rather observations from nature may direct, the edge of the tint nearest the warmth softened off. Give depth of tone to the clouds by repeating with gray tints and glazing with lake and ochre. The boats and ground in front, form one mass relieved by the stream of light across the middle of the subject. Attention should be given to the touches which express the forms of the waves rolling on the shore, that they may be no stronger than just to determine the parts, lest hardness be produced. The distance is kept tender in gray tones, the lights touched to agree with their situation respecting the aërial perspective.

Ruin.

The sky as in the foregoing scene, by repetition. The masses of this subject are strong, and laid with a pencil rather bare of colour, by which means a number of sparkling lights are left, which being afterwards toned down with appropriate tints produce a pleasing effect, and characterise the ruin. The colours are powerful but few; the building is washed with burnt ochre, relieved by greenish stains, or rendered deeper by touches of sepia and indigo, and stronger touches of burnt sienna, the foliage as in the foregoing subjects.

Cottage.

This subject will require more drawing than the preceding, the objects being more complicated. It is presumed the learner will attend minutely to the outline, referring to the perspective plate to determine the building.



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The sky has a tint of indigo, rendered deeper by repetitions of gray, and tender stains of lake. The opposing masses of trees, &c. are strongly marked with a tint of sepia and indigo, the distant trees have a tint of gray, their lights heightened with gamboge and ochre, and their shades rendered deeper with indigo. The extremities of the trees are to be laid thin, or with a pencil having little colour in it, to prevent their having a heavy or lumpy appearance. In such scenes there is great variety of form, character, and tone, they all require attention. To obtain breadth, destroy the straggling or offensive lights with grays, if in the shade; or with ochre if in the light, and harmonize the subject by breaking the keenness of the cold tints without effecting the aërial tone. If a clearer light be required on a mass of colour, a pencil with clean water may be passed on the part, or touched as best suited, let the water remain until it begins to dry, then dab a linen

cloth on it, to absorb what may remain; and immediately rub up the colour with a bit of bread; such parts may be again retouched until the desired tone be produced. Any degree of force may be obtained by adding sepia and lake to the warm tones, or sepia with indigo to the cold; and richness of touch may be given with burnt sienna in different degrees of force.

It will be observed that the subjects have encreased progressively in force of colour and in intricacy, and it is hoped the learner has studied all the connected particulars as the direction proceeded, for by perseverance alone can they be rendered familiàr. "Nothing is denied to well dircted labour: nothing is to be obtained without it."

FINIS.

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